

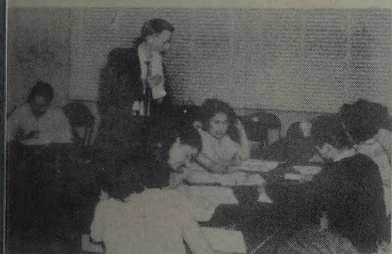
today

Quarterly Report

4. No. 2

Chicago Housing Authority

April 1955



School days are here again for some of the grown-ups at Governor Frank O. Lowden Homes, 95th and Wentworth Avenue. Classes in Basic English, under sponsorship of the Board of Education, are held in the Community Room on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 9, and most of the students are Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans.

Moving spirit and organizer of the class is Mrs. Evelyn Commerse, one of Lowden Homes' energetic community leaders. While canvassing the project some months back with a petition for a new elementary school, Mrs. Commerse had difficulty communicating with the Puerto Rican tenants.

"When one man told her sadly that 'it makes no difference how good you are at your job when you can't make yourself understood,' she made up her mind to help."

From the CHA management staff, she heard about the Americanization program conducted by the Board of Education. At the Board office, she learned that at a free class could be sponsored if 15 or 20 people enrolled. With the help of some of the Puerto Ricans, the required number of prospective students was short. Classes began on January 1 and will continue so long as the need exists and attendance is stable.

And what happened to Mrs. Commerse's petition for an elementary school? The Board of Education says the new school, previously planned, is one of the first on the new construction schedule.

Puerto Rican residents of other CHA projects have also profited by the Board of Education classes in English. The first of these was started at Cabrini Homes two years ago; classes have been scheduled at Jane Addams Houses and Olander Homes.

FEDERAL AID ON 3,800 NEW CHA HOMES HINGES ON EARLY COUNCIL ACTION

Chicago has cleared another hurdle in its race to get federal aid for 3,800 additional public housing dwellings before the June 30, 1955, deadline. On March 3, the federal government followed up its previous certification of Chicago's "workable program for urban renewal" with approval of the city's finding that 3,800 new low-rent homes will be needed to house low-income families from redevelopment areas. With these two approvals, the city is eligible for federal assistance under the terms of the Housing Act of 1954.

The next important step is up to the City Council. The 25 sites selected by CHA to accommodate the new housing were introduced at the March 16

Council meeting. They were immediately referred to the Housing Committee for study and recommendation. The Authority hopes for early City Council action.

Even with this approval, the Authority will have to telescope activities that normally require many months into thirty days. Since federal funds for building low-rent housing will not be available after June 30 under terms of the Housing Act of 1954, contracts between the Public Housing Administration and CHA must be executed before that date.

Before PHA can enter into any such contracts with the Authority, CHA must submit complete development plans for each of the 25 proposed projects for approval. While CHA development staff is moving forward on all possible preliminary work, much of it cannot be done until the City Council takes action.

18 EAST CONGRESS: NEW CHA RENTAL OFFICE

The CHA Rental Office will move from present quarters at 537 South Dearborn Street to 18 East Congress Parkway on May 1st.

The new quarters are readily accessible by street car, subway or bus, and are on the ground floor. They are about 25 percent larger than those now occupied on the second floor at the Dearborn Street address.

Increased space will make possible more efficient handling of applicants for housing. Six hundred or more persons call at the office each week to register their housing needs or to be interviewed with respect to their applications.

Prior to the move, CHA staff is circulating all families now on its waiting lists who registered prior to January, 1954, to bring up to date information on present address, income, priority, size of family, and need for housing. Many of these families registered in 1949 and 1950.

MAYOR DALEY TO PARTICIPATE IN CABRINI GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY

The Honorable Richard J. Daley, new Mayor of Chicago, will turn the first shovel of earth when ground-breaking ceremonies are held at Oak and Hudson Streets at 1:30 p.m., on Friday, April 22 for the 1,925-dwelling addition to Frances Cabrini Homes. Other local officials, federal and state housing officers, and Near North Side neighborhood leaders will also participate.

The new \$26,000,000 housing development will replace fifteen city blocks of blight on the Near North Side.

The Corbetta Construction Company of Chicago will erect the first eight of the fifteen buildings. Work on the remaining seven and the community building, which will serve the project and the surrounding neighborhood, will be started early in fall.

CHA MOVES FOR LARGER APARTMENTS IN CITY'S LOW-RENT HOUSING PROJECTS

CHA is taking steps to provide a higher proportion of three-or-more bedroom apartments in its low-rent housing developments to meet the needs of Chicago's low-income families.

Throughout its history, the Authority has been unable to build as many large-size units as needed, first because of wartime restrictions, and later because of costs. As a consequence, the supply of large dwellings has lagged far behind the demand. Analysis of applications from eligible families today shows a current need for at least 3,300 additional dwellings of a size to accommodate families of five or more.

The immediate action toward solving the problem is expansion of a "conversion" program at Jane Addams Houses started on an experimental basis in the Fall of 1953. This consists of combining one-bedroom apartments to provide three-bedroom apartments.

The long-range plan, now under discussion with the Public Housing Administration, contemplates including a high proportion of large units in all future projects.

The "Conversion" Program

Since September, 1953, eleven new three-bedroom apartments have been added at Jane Addams Houses by combining 22 one-bedroom units. These "conversions" were simple; they entailed only cutting a door through a common wall. Movable kitchen appliances were taken out, but built-in cupboards and drawer space were not disturbed, and no structural changes were made. Minimum alterations, it was felt, would facilitate "re-

conversion" should such a step be advisable at a later date. While costs were low, averaging only about \$80 per apartment, the results in terms of convenience, room traffic, arrangement and appearance were not wholly satisfactory.

The heavy demand for large units, which shows no sign of letting up in the future, induced the Authority to expand its conversion program at Addams and at some of the other projects where there are many small apartments. The first remodeling jobs were done on a piecemeal basis, as units were vacated.

Under the expanded program, whole buildings or entire tiers of apartments within buildings will be remodeled at one time. The conversions are no longer considered temporary, and to assure a better result, some structural changes will be made. About three days' labor and about \$250 per apartment will permit CHA to remove kitchen equipment, replace closets where necessary, move walls to enlarge kitchen-dining areas, etc.

Work has now started on combining 26 one-bedroom units at Jane Addams Houses and 12 at Trumbull Park Homes. Robert Brooks Homes is being inspected to determine the number of units which will lend themselves to conversion.

More Large Units in New Projects

Two-thirds of Chicago's federally aided low-rent housing developments built or already designed are of the one- or two-bedroom type. Only 28 percent have three

NEW QUARTERS FOR DISTRICT HEALTH CENTER

The Chicago Health Department's District Health Center, located in basement space 1310 West Roosevelt Road in Jane Addams Houses since it opened in 1953, will soon have new headquarters at the Near West Side CHA project.

Dr. Herman N. Bundesen, president of the Board of Health, has notified the authority that the CHA offer of space in former Jane Addams management building at 1000 South Lytle Street has been accepted. The building was vacated last summer when CHA management activities for Addams, Robert Brooks Homes, Loomis Courts, Grace Abbott Homes were consolidated in a new administration building on Locust Street.

The move will enlarge space for interviewing patients and offer other advantages. Some remodeling of the building is necessary for maximum efficiency. This will be in place as soon as the city architect submits recommendations for the alterations.

The Health Center was opened to serve residents of the Near West Side. Its opening was announced as the first step in the long-planned decentralization of the Chicago Health Department.

bedrooms, and units with four or more bedrooms — suitable for families of more than seven persons — represent only 28 percent of the total.

A study of applications from eligible families on CHA waiting lists indicates that families requiring three-bedroom apartments usually wait a minimum of two or three years for a low-rent apartment. Many families with seven or more persons have been on CHA lists for five years or more. Unless a greater number of large apartments are built, only a small fraction of these eligible large families can ever be housed.

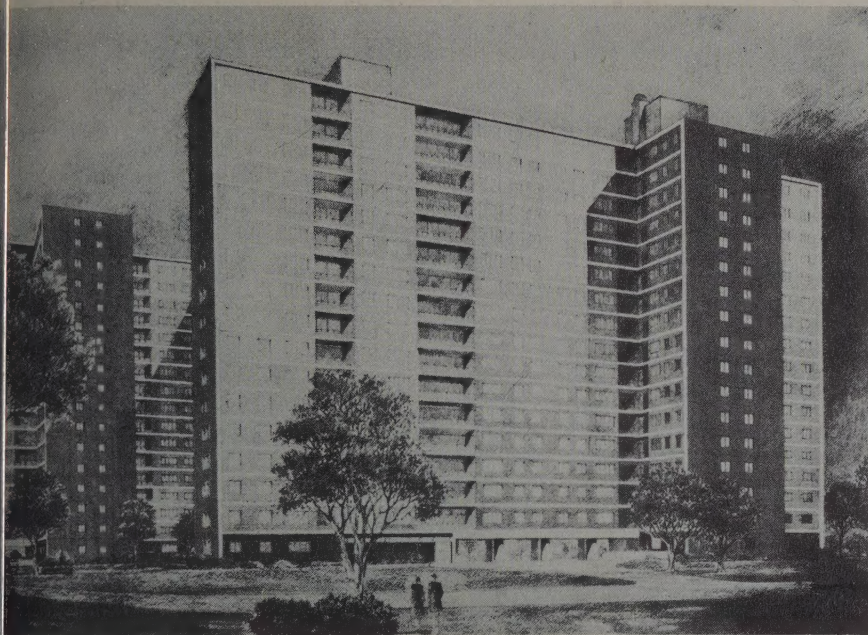
3,300 Large Units Needed

When the Authority's new projects now being planned are completed, at least 11 percent of the city's total low-rent housing should have four or more bedrooms. At least 31 percent should be of the three-bedroom type, and the balance should represent one- and two-bedroom apartments. This means that 3,343 three-or-more bedroom apartments are needed. Seventy-five percent of the 4,628 units—3,800 on sites now awaiting approval and 828 at the Golden-Division site—should be of this size.

The Authority's findings have been reported to PHA and are now under consideration. The possibility of concentrating such a high percentage of large units in projects to be built depends largely on the availability of funds and the costs involved. The types of sites approved for the new buildings will have a definite effect on costs, but if all new construction is confined to built-up slum sites, high costs of land clearance may make the building of this proportion of large units impossible.



SMALL ROWHOUSE DEVELOPMENTS WITH GARDENS AND LAWNS will be emphasized in CHA plans for new public housing in Chicago. Racine Courts (above), CHA development on the Far South Side, is typical of what the Authority proposes to build on most of the 25 new sites now awaiting City Council action. (See story p. 1)



BIDS ASKED FOR OLANDER TWIN BUILDING

Victor A. Olander Homes, CHA low-rent apartment building completed at 40th and Lake Park Avenue in 1953, will be matched by a twin this spring. Bid opening for construction of the second apartment building, just to the south and overlooking the lake, takes place April 19 in CHA offices.

Designed by Shaw, Metz and Dolio, the new structure, like its neighbor, will be a 15-story building containing 150 units. As in the existing building, there will be a fairly high proportion of large apartments. Thirty of the units will have three bedrooms; 88, two bedrooms; and only 32 will be of the one-bedroom type.

Specifications call for asphalt tile flooring and aluminum sash for windows. The new site, which is slightly larger than the first, will allow for expansion of garden areas and play spaces for both buildings.

Six structures occupied the site of Olander addition when it was acquired by the Authority. Demolition has been completed on the portion needed for immediate building, but one structure not in the path of construction remains standing. This building is occupied by five single persons for whom new living quarters have not yet been obtained. Originally some 60 families lived on the site.

Total development cost of the addition will be about \$250,000 higher than Olander Homes. The increase is due to higher costs of acquiring land, relocating site residents and clearance.

7 HOMES FOR MORE THAN 1,600 LOW-INCOME FAMILIES will get under way at 35th State Streets early this summer. About May 1, the Chicago Housing Authority will invite architects to bid on construction of the first six of the eight elevator apartment buildings planned for the site, and ground-breaking should follow within sixty days. Holabird and Root and Burgee, Architects, have designed six 17-story and two 10-story buildings containing 1,644 apartments with one to five bedrooms. Structures are unique in that no columns or beams will be used. The buildings are to be supported by reinforced concrete walls. Entrances to apartments will open on galleries so that each family will have a semi-private porch. There will be no inside corridors. Buildings will be grouped around garden areas and play lots. In inclement weather, children will be covered play areas provided at ground level, since portions of the buildings will stand on stilts. Exteriors will be of hard-pressed face brick which CHA plans to use in all future housing developments to reduce maintenance costs.

NEW SOUTH SIDE HOMES TO BE SOLD BY CHICAGO DWELLINGS ASSOCIATION

Construction of 41 rowhouse units at 46th Street and Princeton Avenue will begin late this spring. This is the first part of the new housing project to be built by the Chicago Dwelling Association. The homes will be offered for sale to private buyers. Prices and terms of sale will be announced when construction contract is awarded. Designed by Friedman, Alschuler and Associates, the houses will be two stories high, joined in rowhouse buildings, three or four to a building. Living rooms, combination-kitchen-dining rooms, and utility rooms occupy the first floor; bedrooms and bathrooms will be on the second. There will be no basements, but ample closet and storage space has been provided. Specifications call for exterior finish in face brick veneer.

Street Parking

Canopies and trellises will mark entrances to each unit. Each unit will have an asphalt bay to provide off-street parking. Frontages for houses in the center of buildings range from 12 to 29 feet, while corner houses have considerably more. The average two-bedroom house contains 933 square feet of floor space. The three-bedroom houses have about 1,400 square feet of space. Each house will have its own gas-fired forced hot air heating unit.

The Chicago Dwellings Association is the city's private non-profit corporation which was created to build housing for middle-income families. Its first housing development, completed in the fall of 1953, was Midway Gardens, a 318-apartment rental project at 60th Street and Langley Avenue.

The rowhouses at 46th Street and Princeton Avenue represent the first new building in the West Kenwood neighborhood for many years.

NEW TENANTS SHOW LOWER YEARLY INCOMES

Annual incomes of families moving into federally aided CHA low-rent housing in the last three months of 1954 averaged \$2,465. This was \$245 below the \$2,710 reported in the previous quarter.

The drop reflects admission of an increased number of servicemen's families who subsist on allotment checks from the government. About a fifth of the families moving into newly completed apartments at Harold L. Ickes Homes, 22d and State Streets, were headed by men in the armed forces.

Another important contributing factor to lowered income was the increase in the number of families admitted who receive assist-

SELECT ARCHITECTS FOR DIVISION-OGDEN

Pace Associates, Chicago architectural firm, was selected by CHA on April 12 to design the low-rent housing development planned for the site at Division and Ogden Avenue.

The 25-acre tract, bounded by Clybourn, Larrabee, Scott, Division and Ogden, lies north of the Authority's new Cabrini Extension, for which ground will be broken on April 22d. Redevelopment of the new site, which clears a triangle of blight, is in line with the Chicago Plan Commission's suggestion that the residential character of the neighborhood be retained.

About 800 dwellings will be contained in elevator and walk-up apartment buildings grouped around play areas and garden spaces. To make room for the new building, some 730 dwellings will be demolished, most of them in one- and two-family frame buildings. Two-thirds of the present structures are substandard.

ance or benefits from public or private agencies. For the three months ended December 31, 1954, these families represented 38 percent of the 750 new move-ins, compared to 32 percent of 783 in the previous quarter.

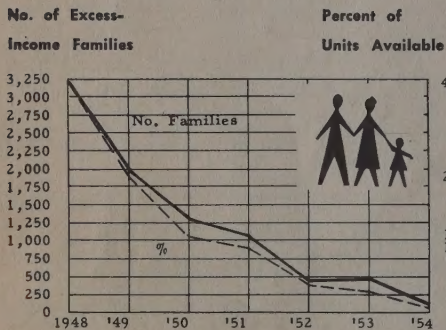
CONGRESS CONSIDERS HOUSING FOR THE AGED

Both houses of Congress are giving attention to housing aged persons.

On March 11, a bill to permit admission of widows, widowers and elderly single persons to low-rent housing projects built with federal aid was introduced in the Senate. The bill was referred to the Committee on Banking and Currency.

Eleven bills "to establish a program for the housing of elderly persons of low income" were introduced simultaneously on February 10 in the House of Representatives. All the bills propose construction of 50,000 dwellings throughout the nation for elderly persons during the fiscal year 1956 and in each of the next four succeeding years. The bills propose that such units "be conveniently located, so as to provide to the maximum extent practicable for . . . comfort and welfare and to aid in alleviating the infirmities characteristic of the elderly." Provisions are also included to make it possible to convert existing programs for this new use.

EXCESS-INCOME FAMILIES IN CHA PERMANENT PROJECTS



Families with incomes above maximums allowed for continued residence in CHA low-rent homes have declined from 3,215 at the end of 1948 to 1,000 on December 31, 1954. All families with excess incomes are under notice to move. While they remain in CHA homes, they are charged rents comparable with those paid by tenants in privately owned rental properties of similar size and type.

CHA BOARD RE-ELECTS OFFICERS

At the annual meeting of the CHA Commissioners on March 14, the present officers of the Authority were all re-elected to their same posts. John R. Fugard, Joseph P. Sullivan, and John L. Yancey remain chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer respectively. Executive Director William B. Kean will also continue to serve as secretary.

NEW NEIGHBORS FOR LECLAIRE COURTS

A private builder has started construction of twenty new ranch-type homes at 45th and Cicero, next to the Leclaire Courts public housing development. The buildings are the first of 200 or more single-family homes planned for the neighborhood by the C & L Builders, Inc.

The two- and three-bedroom homes, to be sold at prices ranging from \$13,900 to \$15,300, are available to ex-GIs with a down payment of \$800 and monthly installments of \$95, including principal, interest and insurance.

Development of this South West Side neighborhood by private interests is looked upon as a considerable advantage to the CHA project residents. The community growth with new private housing can offer stimulus for expanded shopping and entertainment facilities. At the same time, the 616 families in Leclaire Courts, which reached this size in 1954, are potential customers for neighborhood business.

CHA ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

"These Are the Families," the Authority's 1954 annual report, came off the press in March. The report emphasizes the people who live in Chicago's public housing.

Twelve "family histories" of residents of CHA homes typify the kinds of families who moved in to projects during the past year.

Statistics, building cost data, and financial reports are also included in the report, which is available on request to the Authority.

CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENT

March 31, 1955

COMPLETED:

26 Developments—12,705 Dwellings

1. Jane Addams Houses	(F)	1,000
2. Julia C. Lathrop Homes	(F)	92
3. Trumbull Park Homes	(F)	48
4. Ida B. Wells Homes	(F)	1,680
5. Frances Cabrini Homes	(F)	58
6. Robert H. Brooks Homes	(F)	83
7. Bridgeport Homes	(F)	14
8. Lawndale Gardens	(F)	12
9. Altgeld Gardens	(F)	1,490
10. Wentworth Gardens	(F)	40
11. Dearborn Homes	(F)	80
12. Maplewood Courts	(C-S)	13
13. Harrison Courts	(C-S)	12
14. Leclaire Courts	(C-S)	31
15. Racine Courts	(C-S)	12
16. Ogden Courts	(C-S)	13
17. Prairie Ave. Cts.-I-II-III	(C-S)	31
18. Archer Courts	(C-S)	14
19. Loomis Courts	(C-S)	12
20. Philip Murray Homes	(F)	50
21. Victor A. Olander Homes	(F)	15
22. Leclaire Courts Ext.	(F)	30
23. Grace Abbott Homes-II	(F)	76
24. Ida B. Wells Extension-I	(F)	45
25. Harold L. Ickes Homes-I-II	(F)	52
26. Gov. Frank O. Lowden Homes	(F)	12

UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

4 Developments—1,516 Dwellings

23. Grace Abbott Homes-II	(F)	45
24. Ida B. Wells Extension-II	(F)	19
25. Harold L. Ickes Homes-II	(F)	27
27. Gov. Henry Horner Homes-I	(F)	59

IN DESIGN AND LAND PURCHASE STAGES:

8 Developments—6,059 Dwellings

17. Prairie Ave. Cts.-IV	(C-S)	
27. Gov. Henry Horner Homes-II	(F)	32
28. 35th & State	(F)	1,644
29. Cabrini Extension	(F)	1,922
30. New Rockwell Neighborhood	(F)	973
31. Prairie Ave. Cts. Ext.	(F)	204
32. Olander Homes Ext.	(F)	150
33. Division-Ogden	(F)	828

VETERANS' TEMPORARIES

2 Projects—471 Dwellings

1. Ashburn Homes	(C-F)	299
2. Sauganash Homes	(C-F)	172

(F) Financed with federal funds; (C-S) city and state funds; and (C-F) city and federal funds

CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY

608 South Dearborn Street
Chicago 5, Illinois

COMMISSIONERS

John R. Fugard, *Chairman*
Joseph P. Sullivan, *Vice Chairman*
John L. Yancey, *Treasurer*
Samuel N. Katzin

William B. Kean, *Executive Director*

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